

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please amend the Abstract as follows:

A center beam railcar that has increased volume capacity and versatility. The car preferably has a narrow top chord that does not interfere with loading by overhead crane, but still contributes significantly to the strength and load carrying capacity of the railcar. ~~The top chord is preferably of a generally rectangular, tubular configuration, and has a width substantially equal to or slightly less than the width of the intermediate portion of the center beam therebelow. The railcar preferably has a depressed central portion that provides a clear loading height of at least about 14 feet thereabove, located between a pair of higher end portions, each preferably having a length of about 16 feet so that the end portions may be used to carry products of substantial length. The depth of the depression may be, e.g., about 16 in., to enable the depression to accommodate bundles of engineered wood products having a height of 15 1/2 in., with the tops of the bundles being at about the same level as the adjacent end portions of the deck. The lading is preferably secured by straps, each having a first end secured on a first side of the car, and a second end secured on the opposite side of the car. The strap may extends over or under the top chord. In the preferred embodiment of the invention, the straps may be secured at or near the side sills on both sides of the car. Winches may be provided only on one side, with a simple retaining mechanism for securing a strap end provided on the other side. The winches and retaining mechanisms preferably are longitudinally adjustable in tracks on the side of the car.~~